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RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY 0277
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RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 0244
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SUBJECT: IRELAND TACITLY FAVORS VOSS FOR ICAO SECRETARY
GENERAL

REF: A. STATE 12863
[1](#)B. YOUNG-BARKS E-MAIL OF 2/3/06

[1](#)1. (SBU) Ireland supports U.S. candidate Bill Voss' bid for the post of ICAO Secretary General, according to Robin McKay, Department of Transport Principal Officer for Aviation Regulation and International Relations, to whom Post delivered ref A demarche on February 2. Ongoing discussions among ABIS countries on the impending ICAO elections, however, make it difficult for Ireland to express support for Voss publicly.

[1](#)2. (SBU) An additional complicating factor, said McKay, was the dual-ticket dynamic of the elections for ICAO Secretary General and President. He explained that when French candidate Raymond Benjamin was pursuing the Secretary General's post, the "shoe-in" ticket was Benjamin and Mexican candidate Roberto Kobeh for ICAO President. Since Benjamin's election as Secretary General would have preceded the presidential vote, the Swiss were prepared to withdraw their presidential candidate, Philippe Rochat, on the understanding that Europeans could not occupy both posts. McKay pointed out that Benjamin's withdrawal from the race had led the Swiss to see renewed hope in Algerian Taieb Cherif's candidacy for Secretary General, giving the Swiss, in turn, more hope for Rochat as President. ABIS countries besides Switzerland, however, recognized that a Cherif-Rochat ticket would be the worst electoral outcome, since neither candidate would push ICAO reform and, moreover, ABIS countries would alienate the developing countries supporting Kobeh's candidacy for President. The key, observed McKay, would be perceptions of Voss's strength in the lead-up to the Secretary General's election, which might lead the Swiss to

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"ease back" on Rochat's candidacy on the premise that an American and a European could not hold ICAO's top posts. McKay added that if, in the scenario of Voss' election, Rochat remained in the President's race, Austria would have to vote for him to avoid the embarrassing possibility that he would receive no votes at all.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Post also discussed ref A demarche with Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Deputy Director for United Nations Affairs, Brian Cahalane, who noted that the DFA would defer to the Department of Transport as the lead agency on the ICAO elections. According to Cahalane, the DFA was prepared to defer to Transport mostly because Ireland, as an ABIS country represented by Austria, would not be casting its own vote in

the ICAO elections. He added that he was in touch with McKay about the elections, and he promised to pass ref A points to other DFA offices with interests in international organizations.

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